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VERSE WRITING IN ALABAMA

By

WADE H. COLEMAN, JR.

UNIVERSITY, ALABAMA

1927

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VERSE WRITING IN ALABAMA

BY

Wade H. Coleman, Jr.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences in the University of Alabama.

University, Alabama.
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

EARLY VERSE WRITING ACTIVITY

The University of Alabama - William Russell Smith - The Bachelor's Button - College Musings - A. A. Muller - Thomas Maxwell - J. G. Barr -- F. A. P. Barnard.

CHAPTER II

ALEXANDER BEAUFORT MEEK

Early life and training - The Southron - The Red Eagle- Songs and Poems of the South - Meek's theory of poetry.

CHAPTER III

ANTE-BELLUM POETS

Mrs. Julia Pleasants Cresswell and Thomas Bibb Bradley - Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz - A. J. Requier - Henry Lynden Flash - Mrs. Julia Shelton - Sallie Ada Reedy Vance - Mrs. Julia L. Keyes.

CHAPTER IV
CIVIL WAR VERSE

Nature of verse produced during Civil War period - Unconventional verse of Col. T. B. Wetmore and others - Father Ryan - A. J. Requier - Henry Lynden Flash - Mrs. I. M. P. Ockenden.

Chapter V

THE POETRY OF RECONSTRUCTION. POETS OF THE NINETIES

Marked absence of great poetry during reconstruction - General Alpheus Baker - Warfield Creath Richardson - Mrs. Mary Evelyn Moore Davis - John Trotwood Moore -

T. C. DeLeon - W. P. Chilton, Jr. - J. M. Oliver - Thomas Q. Barnes - Niles Pierce - Mrs. Lillian Rozell Messenger - Julia S. Tutwiler - Mrs. Kate Slaughter McKinney - Mrs. Mary NcNeil Fenollosa - Mrs. Belle R. Harrison - Samuel Lowrie Robertson - Andrew M. McConnell - Anne Bozeman Lyon - Helen Keller - Mrs. Margaret E. O'Brien Davis - Louis DeV. Chaudron - Mary Gordon Duffee.

CHAPTER VI

MISS MARTHA YOUNG

Early life and distinguished ancestry - "Eli Sheppard" - Plantation Songs - Plantation Bird Legends - In a Southern Garden - Miss Young's influence - Nature of her poetry - Comments of noted critics - Personality - Work of Miss Howard Weeden.

CHAPTER VII

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK

Bank as greatest Alabama poet - Early life and training - Cap and Bells - Rings and Love Knots - Rhymes and The Grapevine Swing - Nature of his poetry - Purpose - Present residence.

CHAPTER VIII

TWENTIETH CENTURY POETS. VERSE WRITING IN COLLEGES

Clement Wood - Lawrence H. Lee, Jr. - Zitella Cooke - Carl Carmer - Hudson Strode - Julian Rayford - Alfred Battle Beale - Marion Cuthbert and Waverly Turner Carmichael, negro poets - Mrs. Lollie Belle Wylie - Mrs. Mary Ware - Mrs. Laura S. Webb - O. T. Dosier - Annie Arrington Tyson - J. W. Overall - Mrs. Mary E. Pope - R. B. McEachin - Mrs. C. E. Moore - Lucine Finch - Col. M. V. Moore - C. J. Chilton - Mrs. J. A. Cornelius - Scottie Frazier McKenzie - Russell Smith - Ruth McClellan - Iver Granath - Humphrey C. Traylor - V. H. Cornell - Susan Mabry - Hart Gilbrand - Lucie Hard McKinley - Roberta Hayes - Alabama College - Woman's College of Alabama - Some University of Alabama poets - The University of Alabama - Conclusion.

CHAPTER I

EARLY VERSE WRITING ACTIVITY

It is not surprising perhaps that the University of Alabama was the center of the first notable verse writing activity in the State. Although Alabama was admitted to the Union in 1819 and had been settled in part some years before that date, it was not until the University opened its doors in 1831 that any marked literary activity was manifested. The decades before that time had been spent in settling the new territory and in achieving some kind of civilization and government for the new State. The early pioneers did not have the time for writing verse, essays, and books. Moreover, a large portion of them were not the type to produce literature. They were naturally more concerned with the everyday facts of building houses, clearing fields, rearing families, and producing food for their families. The early settlers were immigrants, mainly concerned with bread and butter interests which affect immigrants. The early settlers of Alabama were superior immigrants, but nevertheless, it is a fact that they, in common with other Southern gentlemen, were not excessively devoted to the reading of literature,[1] and certainly not to the production of it. Even later when men of literary ability did appear, their literary activity was a side stream in their lives. This fact is known to every student of Southern literature and is no less true for the other Southern States than for Alabama. Edgar Allan Poe is perhaps the only early Southern writer to devote himself exclusively to writing, and he cannot properly be

1. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 267

claimed as a representative Southern writer, since his genius was an "emotional accident rather than a native product."[1]

The wonder is, then, that so soon after the settlement of the new State had begun, any literary interest should be evident. Yet this is true. As early as 1833 the University of Alabama was a real center of intellectual activity. There existed a literary coterie consisting of members of the University faculty, students in the University, and people of Tuscaloosa which devoted its attention to production of original literary matter in general and to verse writing in particular.[2] A literary coterie of this kind, whenever or wherever it exists, is usually due to the influence of some one personality or of some one motivating idea or a combination of the two. So far as can be learned the moving personality in this case was Alexander Beaufort Meek,[3] and the motivating idea was to give expression to the poetic talent at the University and to show that Alabama, as part of the South, was capable of producing real literature. The reason for assuming that Meek was a leader in this literary group is the fact that he edited the literary magazine, The Southron, in which most of the work of this group was published. These writers seem not to have been especially organized. There is no record of any meeting to discuss style or to offer criticism, nor is there any indication that they thought of themselves as a "group". They wrote and contributed to The Southron or published their work through

1. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 259
2. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. II, pp.888-890
3. Maxwell, Thomas The King Bee's Dream, p. 101.

other channels without any kind of superficial organization. Alexander Beaufort Meck is perhaps Alabama's greatest early poet and it is significant that he was a member of this early literary group at the University of Alabama. Others who were prominent are William Russell Smith, John G. Barr, Albert A. Muller, Thomas Maxwell, and, after 1837, F. A. P. Barnard.[1]

William Russell Smith published the first literary production as such, in Alabama.[2] This was a small volume of verse with the title College Musings, or Twigs from Parnassus. It has not been possible to find a copy of this book, but its quaint title piques one's curiosity. Without having read the book, it is yet justifiable to say that it occupies a unique and very important place in the history of Alabama poetry. It appeared in 1833 in the author's eighteenth year. Later in 1836-1837, Smith edited and published the first literary magazine in Alabama. This magazine was called The Bachelor's Button, and was issued from Mobile and Tuscaloosa.[3] William Russell Smith deserves especial attention from a student of Alabama literature because of the two facts just stated; he published the first book of poems and edited the first literary magazine in Alabama. Since he wrote his little book of poems while a student at the University of Alabama, it is safe to infer that he was in thorough sympathy with Meck in the verse writing activity of the early University. No doubt they discussed their work with each other as students and offered mutual criticism. That their interests were similar and that they held each other in high esteem is seen from their

1. Maxwell, Thomas, The King Bee's Dream, p. 100
2. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. II, pp 888-
3. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. IV, (890 p. 1597

correspondence and from the fact that Meek wrote a poem entitled A Poet's Wife, and date December 1, 1863, for the wife of his friend, in which he praises the inspiration of Mrs. Smith for her poet-husband.[1]

In the courage of his long and eventful life Smith found time apart from politics and active participation in public life to devote his energy to literature. Besides his poetry, he wrote a book of personal recollections and called it Reminiscences of a Long Life. This book is remarkable for its excellent, though rambling, narratives and for its intimate and delightful discussion of prominent Alabama people. It is of value to students of Alabama verse because it contains reproductions of some eighteen poems by seven or eight authors.[2] It would be practically impossible to obtain copies of some of these poems anywhere else. For this reason, in the publication of his Reminiscences, Smith makes a valuable contribution to the study of Alabama verse writing. Very often he accompanies these poems with a few pages of criticism which show keen poetic appreciation and scholarly appraisal. In 1834, just after the publication of College Musings, Smith produced the poem called Bridal Eve. This poem is not a remarkably important work, but its publication shows that the young author's literary endeavor did not stop with his first work, but was continuing.

When William Russell Smith began the publication of The Bachelor's Button in December, 1836, he started something new in

1. Smith, W. R. Reminiscences of a Long Life, pp. 343-344
2. Ibid, pp. 7-8

Alabama literary circles.[1] There had never been a literary periodical issued in the State before that time. This magazine contained short stories, poems, book reviews, and other matter of a literary nature. Judging from his own interest and that of his colleagues Smith hoped to found a monthly review which would reflect the literary atmosphere of Alabama and give recognition at home to such writers as deserved to be recognized. The magazine was the result of hopeful youthful enthusiasm and counted on popular literary interest for support. Smith and his companions believed that this popular literary interest existed in Alabama and their aim was to foster and increase it by a magazine of this kind. However, as has been stated, the popular concern in Alabama was not with literature. There were too many other considerations to engage the attention of the magazine's expected constituency. After publishing four issues of The Bachelor's Button in Mobile, Smith moved his office to Tuscaloosa. Only two numbers were issued from Tuscaloosa. Due to lack of support the magazine was discontinued in 1837 after a brief but worthwhile career.[2]

In 1860 Smith wrote his longest and most important poem. It is called The Uses of Solitude, and was delivered at the request of the Alpha of Alabama Phi Beta Kappa Society at their meeting on July 11th, 1860.[3] It is a long poem in three parts written in conventional blank verse and is the best example of Smith's style. His style is probably more the expression of the literary fashion of his time and of his formal education

1. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. IV.p.1597
2. Ibid. p. 1597
3. Smith, W. R. Reminiscences of a Long Life. p. 346

than it is of his own personality and inclination. His life was vigorous, realistic, and practical, and governed by high principles. He was a man who lived fully and who was in close touch with his contemporaries in thought, feeling, and understanding. Yet, in spite of this thoroughly practical background. his literary style both in poetry and prose has a tendency to be what is termed "high-flown". He is fond of sounding phrases, sonorous periodds, copious allusions to Homer and to Greek Mythology, and a certain stilted elegance of expression. He is naively patriotic in certain passages of The Uses of Solitude, and sincerely earnest, when he mentions national heroes such as Washington and Marion in the same breath almost with Demosthenes, Plato, Cicero, and Leonidas. Altogether, the poem is enjoyable for its smoothness of rhythm and elevation of thought coupled with delightful imagery and very human touches in some places. Though this poem has not received the recognition that it perhaps deserves, in the opinion of some critics it is of sufficient merit to earn for Smith a place among the great American poets.[1]

Albert A. Muller, D. D. , was an Anglican clergyman who was rector of the Tuscaloosa parish during the early twenties and thirties. He was, most probably, the first minister of Christ Episcopal Church, though this is not known to be a fact.[2] The Rev. Muller was a man of very great culture and much charm of personality. He was a splendid preacher and was well thought of in Tuscaloosa and University society as a gentleman of rare social and intellectual gifts. His interest in poetry and

1. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. IV, p.1597
2. Smith, W. R. Reminiscences of a Long Life, p. 161

other literature was in keeping with his character as a man of culture and education, and, therefore, it is not surprising that he wrote several poems and contributed largely to The Southron, when A. B. Meek began publishing this magazine in 1839. Muller's chief poem is Sunset at Rome[1] which appeared in The Southron as a "prize poem". This poem is well worth reading. It is quite in keeping with the classic tradition of Pope and has not one shade of local color. There is not a single break in the rhythm, which is iambic pentameter, not an imperfection in the couplet rhyme, and only a few run-over lines. The march is indeed magnificent in its uninterrupted sweep and the imagination of the poet is apt and delicate in the numerous classical allusions which the poem contains. There is no "let-down" of feeling anywhere. The writer begins on a rather exalted plance and stays there throughtout the poem.

In Sunset at Rome and in other poems Muller showed promise of genius. However this promise was never fulfilled. Unfortunately, Muller allowed himself to become the boon companion of a dissolute young lawyer and was led into situations unbecoming a minister of the gospel.[2] He was forced to resign his pulpit and go elsewhere. Later, he was apparently received again into favor with his Church, since he was for a time the Episcopal Minister at Clarksville, Tennessee, from which place he contributed poems to The Southron.[3] He seems never, however, to have regained complete control of himself. Certainly he never produced anything so noteworthy as Sunset at Rome. Fir ally he drifted to New York and became a literary hack writer

1. W. R. Smith, Reminiscences of a Long Life, p. 161
2. Ibid. p. 161
3. Ibid. p. 167

for one of the newspapers. In one of his letters Dr. Henry Tutwiler mentions an appeal for money which Rev. Muller had sent to him. William Russell Smith was convinced that Muller could have been one of the outstanding literary figures of his time. A comment of Smith's on the subject is quoted here to show what high regard he had for Muller's ability and incidentally as an example of Smith's own high-flown diction.

> "In those thirty years of dreary and miserable wanderings, even at the rate of one line a day, he might have left us an Iliad, singing of softer beauties than Helen's, greater daring than Diomede's, wider desolation than Troy's, and repeating and celebrating loves as pure as those of Hector and Andromache, and thundering with woes deeper than those of Priam and Hecuba. But such are the vicissitudes of life; such is the inevitable decree, that the 'wages of sin' shall weigh down the awards of merit." [1]

Thomas Maxwell was an Englishman by birth who came to Alabama about 1836.[2] He is one of the citizens of Tuscaloosa who helped to make up the verse writing group which was active aroudn the University in the early years of its history. Maxwell's literary activity was decidedly a side line. He was a very astute and enterprising merchant who built up a prosperous business in Tuscaloosa through his ability to trade his cheese and shot and tinned goods for vension, butter, chickens, and other products of the countryside, and then to trade this produce to the people of Tuscaloosa for money and property. His verse writing was indulged in for pleasure and, incidentally, for social recognition, since Dr. Barnard of the University, A. B. Meek of the city, and others were very ready to recognize

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1. Smith, W. R. Reminiscences of a Long Life, p. 170
2. Ibid. pp. 309-314

and welcome literary ability. One of Maxwell's early poems, which appeared in The Southron in 1839, is called A Song, by an Englishman. He wrote other poems, mostly occasional pieces, and also some forceful prose. His verse is not especially important, but the fact that he aided in the early literary movement centering around The Southron is worthy of note. Later, in 1875, there appeared The King Bee's Dream. Though this poem was published in 1875, it more properly belongs to this period, since it contains reproductions of poems written at this time, among them A Song, by an Englishman, and its subject matter is made up largely of events which took place during this period. The poem is divided into six parts and is, as the title and subtitle together have it, The King Bee's Dream: or, Past, Present, and Future of Tuskaloosa. It tells of the young Englishman's departure from England, of his establishing his little shop, which he called the "Bee Hive", and of how he gained the soubriquet "The King Bee". Then it sets out to narrate the history of Tuscaloosa in verse form, with frequent personal, and sometimes humorous, references to people of Tuscaloosa. It is written in very regular iambic tetrameter with couplet rhyme, in a style which is sometimes quasi-grandiloquent, though most often it has a decidedly homely and familiar tang. It is not a remarkable poem from the standpoint of poetry, but it contains a mass of very interesting historical data and some quaint sayings which would pass for proverbs. A resolution adopted by the Druid City Literary Club, for whom it was written, and before whom it was read May 12, 1873, naively gives these quaint

sayings as the chief reason for wanting the poem preserved. The poem contains some good lyrics, of which A Song, by an Englishman and Invocation to Alabama are most noteworthy.

John Gorman Barr, 1823-1858, was a prominent Tuscaloosa lawyer who wrote verse and other matter during this period.[1] He was intimately associated with Meek, Smith, Barnard, and other writers.[2] He was graduated from the University in 1841, receiving first honors and the M. A. degree. Later, after the establishment of the Alpha of Alabama Chapter, he was elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa. Bar did not produce any verse which has remained until now, though he was a regular contributor to The Southron, writing under the nom de plume of "Omega"[3], and assisting Meek in his effort to make the magazine a success.

Alabama has a right to be proud that Professor F. A. P. Barnard, who later became president of Columbia University, began his career at its State University. He was at the University from 1837 until 1854, coming to Tuscaloosa when he was twenty-eight years of age. Interested primarily in the sciences, he was at various times professor of natural philosophy and astronomy, and of chemistry and mathematics. Aside from his classroom work and the studies which interested him in that connection, Professor Barnard was interested in poetry. Being young and well educated, he liked to read poetry and, when given the chance, he liked to write poetry. Therefore he was delighted to ally himself with the congenial literary coterie which

1. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. II, pp.888-890
2. Maxwell, Thomas, The King Bee's Dream, p. 101
3. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. III,p.103

he found on coming to the University. With them he turned his attention to verse writing and produced some creditable sonnets. During this genial time of his young manhood he produced the only verse of his career, writing under the pen name of Charles Augustus Conway. In his poems Professor Barnard was intensely romantic. At times he seems to the modern reader a bit too romantic. His sentiment becomes sometimes too sentimental, thought his poetic conceptions are always good and his rhyme schemes excellent. Professor Barnard like rhyme. In his A Serenade the rhymes are especially pretty and pleasing. He uses natural, true rhymes, employing assonance only on a few occasions. Two of his sonnets, Moral Beauty Unfading and A Valentine, are delightfully pleasing for their regularity, apt images, and euphonious diction. Apparently he tried to make his poems sound well, with good effect. Another poem, in a class by itself, is the Ode to a Jack-Knife.[1] This is a humorous poem and would deserve a place in any anthology of humorous verse. Professor Barnard contributed largely to The Southron during his stay in Alabama. Later when he left to go to the University of Mississippi where he became chancellor, he seems to have given up writing verse. Thus, it can be said that perhaps the most charming period of his life was passed at the University of Alabama.

1. Smith, W. R. Reminiscences of a Long Life. pp. 234-246

literary man.[1]

Although he was not born in Alabama, Meek was distinctly an Alabama product in every other respect. He grew up in Alabama and had an ardent love for the State which he considered his own. From this affection for Alabama he drew his theory of poetry and most of his subject matter.[2] He was profoundly influenced by what he saw in the luxuriant natural scenery around him, in the rich traditions of the country, and in bright future which he believed certain for the State. "A. B. Meek's life owed more to his new environment than to his birthplace; for, if not a native, yet he came early enough to Alabama to feel and share the romance of the commonwealth in which he was to grow up."[3]

The literary magazine, The Southron, has already been mentioned several times in connection with the early literary activity at the University. The editorship of this magazine was the first serious literary venture which Meek undertook. Inspired, no doubt, by the effort of his friend William Russell Smith to issue The Bachelor's Button in 1836-37, Meek began the publication of The Southron in 1839. The aim of the magazine was much the same as that of its predecessor, The Bachelor's Button, namely, to foster the creative literary genius which both Smith and Meek were confident existed in Alabama and the South, and to stimulate and keep alive an interest in literature among the general reading public. Just as Smith's periodical contained

1. Manly, Library of Southern Literature, Vol. VIII, p. 301
2. Meek, A. B. Songs and Poems of the South, Preface.
3. Hamilton, Library of Southern Literature, Vol. VIII, p.3599

short stories, poems, book reviews, and essays, so likewise did The Southron, with the addition of sketches of early Alabama history. Meek later amplified his own historical sketches which appeared in The Southron into his unfinished history of Alabama and into his Romantic Passages in Southwestern History. The fate of The Southron was sadly like that of The Bachelor's Button. Though it continued for a longer period, lasting from 1839 until 1842, it, too, was finally discontinued for want of adequate support from the public.[1]

The Red Eagle is Meek's longest poem, written about 1845, and published by Appleton and Company of New York in 1855. It ran into several editions and met with immediate favor in Alabama and in the cities of the East as well.[2] A later edition by W. T. Sheehan and G. N. Bayzer, was published in 1914 by the Paragon Press of Montgomery. In the introduction to this edition of the poem, the editors made enthusiastic claims for it. They say that The Red Eagle is "a poem which to the South could be as Scott's Lady of the Lake to Scotland."[3] In The King Bee's Dream, Thomas Maxwell speaks of the poem in a complimentary manner.[4]

William Russell Smith and Peter J. Hamilton are not so complimentary as the writers just mentioned. Smith's conceptions

1. Hamilton, Library of Southern Literature, Vol. VIII, p.3601 believed incorrect since Smith, Reminiscences of a Long Life, and Owen, Alabama History and Biography, Vol. IV, p.1597, support statements made here.
2. The Red Eagle, edited by Sheehan-Bayzer, Introduction, pp.5-9
3. Ibid.
4. Maxwell, Thomas, The King Bee's Dream, p. 101

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of poetry and his ideas of Meek's poetic ability seem to be a bit upset by The Red Eagle. Notwithstanding his love for the poet, Smith cannot refrain from expressing his disapproval of the poem and the evident discomfort which he experienced upon reading it. "The Red Eagle", he writes regretfully, "is the most ambitious of Meek's efforts....The incidents of the poem are historical, not poetical. Had Meek elected to put the story in blank verse he might have given us a poem that would have endured,.....for in that measure even an Indian could have occupied his most natural attitude....Weatherford (The Red Eagle) is shorn of much of his majestic proportions, being cut off at the knees by the lyrical sword."[1] Smith does say for the poem that its songs and lyrics are very sweet. Hamilton has also the objection to The Red Eagle that the attempt was made to clothe the savage characters in the poem with Caucasian virtues.[2] It is interesting to note that Montrose J. Moses, in a five page discussion of Meek, does not even mention The Red Eagle.[3]

There is one volume containing some collected poems of A. B. Meek which he published under the title Songs and Poems of the South. This book is now out of print, though there were at least four editions, the fourth being issued in 1857. It contains some thirty-one "songs", forty-five "poems", a long poem called The Day of Freedom, and another with the title The Nuptial Fete. Though this is the only book of poems which Meek

1. Smith, W. R. Reminiscences of a Long Life, pp. 335-338
2. Hamilton, Library of Southern Literature, Vol. VIII, p.3602
3. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, pp. 266-270.

published, it does not, by any means, contain all of his poetic productions. The poet himself says in the introduction to the volume "that the pieces in this collection are but a meagre selection from the writings of the author."[1] Most of his poems were published as they were written in some current periodical in the South or in the East. Nearly every Southern poet has written about the mocking bird, and Meek was no exception. Perhaps his loveliest lyric is called The Mocking Bird. This is the poem which is nearly always mentioned in a discussion of his poetry, either in conversation or in writing.[2] It is above the average mocking bird poem and is characterized by a four line refrain. The Fated City and Balaklava are included in Songs and Poems of the South. They are interesting and are mentioned here together as examples of poems dealing with other than native subject matter. Most of Meek's subject matter is taken from his own environment, a fact which makes him more than ever an Alabama poet, but here are two pieces written about two events, one ancient and one contemporary, which took place in Europe. The Day of Freedom represents a departure from Meek's usual lyrical style, being written principally in blank verse, a verse form which Smith would have preferred for The Red Eagle. Oddly enough, the poem is dedicated to Smith. This is Meek's one blank verse poem.[3] This vehicle is used because The Day of Freedom was written to be spoken at a Fourth of July celebration and was, as the title page states, "pronounced" at Tuscaloosa, July 4th, 1838. The fact that the poem was written in the poet's youth also helps to account for the blank verse. Very probably Meek had not yet developed fully his dislike for

1. Mee, A. B. Songs and Poems of the South, p. vi
2. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 270
3. Smith, W. R. Reminiscences of a Long Life, p. 331

unrhymed iambic pentameter. The poem does contain some lyrical passages.

Meek's theory of poetry was a direct result of his passionate love for Alabama and the South, his native country. Alabama has probably never had a more devoted son to expend energy, time, and talent in the effort to express his filial piety. Meek thought of Alabama as the beginning and the end of excellence is not always actual, then certainly potential. With this attitude in mind, his theory of poetry, which amounted almost to his poetic creed, will seem perfectly logical. Meek confesses his poetic faith in the preface to Songs and Poems of the Sout

> "The poetry of a country should be a faithful expression of its physical and moral characteristics. The imagery, at least, should be drawn from the indigenous objects of the region, and the sentiments by such as naturally arise under the influence of its climate, its institutions, habits of life, and social condition. Verse, so fashioned and colored is as much the genuine product and growth of a land, as its trees and flowers. It partakes of the raciness of the soil, the purity of the atmosphere, the brilliancy of the skies, its mountain pictures, and its broad sweeps of level and undulating territory. The scenery infuses itself into the song; and the feelings and fancies are modulated by the circumstances amid which they have their birth. These opinions have formed the poetic faith of the writer of the present volume. He has not attempted to sing in a mere spirit of imitativeness, or in tropes and metaphors of foreign art and precedent. Gazing upon the delightful land about him--depict its beauties--to weave its illustrative objects into the tissues of his imagination, and to give utterance to the thoughts and emotions congenial to a mind impressed by such associations, and loving at once the patriotic and the beautiful."[1]

A more beautiful and forceful argument in favor of local color would be hard to find. Meek continues to say, with sincere humility, that although he had by no means done justice to his

1. Meek, A. B. Songs and Poems of the South, p. v

" Land " in his poetry, these principles are those which he has tried to follow in his work.

Although Meek was devoted to Alabama and to the South, he did not, by any means, disdain to keep in close touch with the writers in other sections. He was in close touch with William Gilmore Simms of South Carolina. He contributed to Simms' Magnolia and maintained a delightful correspondence with him. He kept in touch with Crafts, Legare, and Kennedy and watched with great interest the career of Edgar Allan Poe. He was acquainted with Bancroft in the North, just as Simms was on good terms with Bryant, and Kennedy with Irving.[1] Altogether, he was thoroughly aware, through correspondence and travel, of the excellences of other sections, and still he continued to prefer his own. He formed his own ideas of the purpose and theory of poetry, just as did Lanier, Poe, and Timrod, and it must be admitted that his theory of poetry is delightfully unique in its charming and glorious provincialism, provincialism which is due, not to lack of knowledge of anything else, but to a superbly deliberate intent.

It is due probably to his love for the lighter lyric verse forms and to his dislike for blank verse that Meek did not like Shakespeare. The plays of Shakespeare had little attraction for him. He saw nothing especially remarkable, neither felt anything very gripping in the dramatic poetry of the great Elizabethan. On the contrary he loved the poetry of Tom Moore, and was literally saturated with his spirit, and particularly with that of "Lalla Rookh". Also, he had no kind of proper regard for the sonnet, which he undervalued to such an extent as to term verse written in sonnet form "poetry in the pillory".[2]

1. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South. pp. 266-270
2. Ibid

Meek's style is characterized by nicety of diction and delicate, imaginative imagery. He loved to sing, and he tried to sing as beautifully as he knew how.

CHAPTER III

ANTE-BELLUM POETS

Julia Pleasants was born August 21, 1821 at Huntsville, Alabama. She was the grand-daughter of Governor Bibb of Alabama and was reared in an atmosphere of the highest culture and of great wealth. She married Judge David Cresswell and lived in Louisiana after her marriage. For this reason she is sometimes claimed as a writer of that State. She published Aphelia, and Other Poems, in collaboration with her cousin, Thomas Bibb Bradley, and also books called Poems soon after the publication of the earlier volume. Another book of poems appeared after he death called Abracadabra. She had the manuscripts of several other books ready for the printer, though they were never published.[1] Apheila, and Other Poems appeared in 1854, and, except for the title poem, deals principally with subject matter related to the South. It is romantically tinged with local color, being at the same time filled with all manner of classical and mythological references. The chief charm of the book is its quaintness and delicacy, a charm best felt by the not too sophisticated critic. It is not, by any means, an example of great poetry. It will never be well known, nor does it deserve to be, for it is written after the fashion of its time, a fashion which was received for a time and then forgotten. Its style is romantic, with all the forced imagery and tendency towards classical allusions common to the ante-bellum aristocratic writers of the South. In the title poem, Aphelia, there is an air of mysterious tragedy and impending doom suggested by the name of the poem, which is

1. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. III, p.424

that of a sinsister Egyptian deity. The writers show evidences of a profound, if somewhat restricted, education of a classical nature, and of a lively, though not unusual, imigination.

Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz was born in Lancaster, Massachusetts in 1800. Her husband was a French gentleman, a professor at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, who later, in 1831, moved to Florence, Alabama. Mrs. Hentz lived successively in Florence, Tuscaloosa, and Tuskegee. Besides publishing books, she wrote poems for magazines from time to time.[1] In 1831 appeared Constance of Werdenberg, a book of poems which is distinctly of its day and age. It has almost no real interest for a modern reader. Other poems are De Lara's Bride, The Snow Flakes, and A Martial Song. DeLara's Bride is the prologue to Mrs. Hentz' most successful play, DeLara or The Moorish Bride. The poem is written in the classic manner, iambic pentameter, rhymed couplet, and is typical of its author's style. It is characterized by a species of emotionalism, and sentimentalism which permeates the pages of a great number of the writers of this period.[2] She was a prolific writer of verse, novels, plays, magazine articles, and stories. She wrote several novels which were very popular in their time, judging from the enthusiastic reviews of them which have been left.[3] Her poems were rather numerous also, and seem to have impressed her contemporaries, for what good reason it is hard to tell now from simply reading the poems. "Her books, widely read in their day, represent the tastes and standards of the society she knew and they picture conditions long since passed away."[4]

1. Forrest, Mary Women of the South, pp. 265-266
2. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 337
3. Forrest, Mary, Women of the South, p. 268
4. Brevard, Library of Southern Literature, Vol. VI,p.2375

It must be that Mrs. Hentz was a woman of unusual charm and commanding personality. Nearly all of her critics, when they wrote of her literary work, commented principally on the delightful personal qualities of Mrs. Hentz herself.[1]

The chief fault with Mrs. Hentz' work is her too great conformity to the fashion of her time. Had she written with more originality, with less obviousness, it might still be possible to feel in her work more of that brilliant personality which seems to have been her radiant possession. Owen says of her, "She depicts Southern life in its refined aspects."[2] A. B. Meek wrote a poem Bird of the South, which he sub-titles "an allegory for Mrs. Caroline Lee Hantz."[3]

Augustus Julian Requier is best remembered for his war poetry, of which class he wrote several pieces. However, before the war he published several volumes of verse which give him a place among the ante-bellum poets. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1825, and received his education in South Carolina where he was admitted to the bar in 1844. He lived in Mobile from 1850 until 1865 and was Confederate States Attorney for Alabama. In 1842 he published a blank verse play called The Spanish Exile. Thus showing evidence rather early in life of literary talent. Crystalline, and Other Poems, appeared in 1859 and another volume, Poems came from the press in 1860.[4] In this book Poems is found the Ode to Shakespeare. The Image, also, appeared, in the volume of 1860. "Cultivated and sensitive himself, he has tastes that separate him from many. His genius is chaste, logical, vigorous, ideal, and subjective. In chastened energy, ideal purity, and symmetrical

1. Forrest, Mary Women of the South, pp. 265-266
2. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol.II, pp.888-89
3. Meek, A. B. Songs and Poems of the South, pp. 152-153
4. Wauchope, in Library of Southern Literature, Vol.X.4395

art, he stands clearly first among the poets of the South. He has less sensuous fervor than Hayne; less geniality and naturalness than Timrod; less melodramatic verve and brilliant anthithesis than Flash; and less dash and graceful fire than Randall; but at the same time he has more suggestive ideality, greater philosophical art, and more elevated range of thought than any of them. He is metaphysical and in the same degree removed from the sensuous and the popular."[1] This criticism of Requier, written while he was still alive, is too enthusiastic in declaring that "he stands clearly among the first poets of the South". This claim can hardly be made today, though it is evident that his poems pleased his contemporary public greatly. The criticism does, however, describe Requier's style in an excellent manner when it attributes to his work metaphysical, idealistic, and "elevated" qualities. These qualities were present in most of the ante-bellum poetry and were considered the summum bonum of good verse. The objection to this kind of verse, which applies to all the poets of this period, is that the style has a tendency to be stilted and unnatural and forced.

Henry Lynden Flash is a poet, one of whose claims, but not his chief claim, to being remembered lies in his war poems. He, also, like Requier, wrote and published verse before the War between the States which gives him a place among ante-bellum writers. Flash was born in Ohio in 1835 but moved South in 1859. He went to college in Kentucky, attending the Western Military Institute, and wrote verse while there which was published in magazines and newspapers.[2] He lived in Mobile for a considerable time, where,

1. Davidson, J. W. Living Writers of the South, pp. 455-456
2. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol.III,p.584

very probably, he wrote the poems which were issued in 1860 by Carleton and Rudd of New York in a volume called Poems.[1] This volume was very popular and was about to go into a second edition when the project was prevented by the War. Another edition was finally issued in 1906 which included some of the writer's war poems.

Among the other ante-bellum poets which might be mentioned, Mrs. Julia Shelton, who wrote under the pen name of "Laura Lorrimer". Mrs. Shelton is said to have possessed "genius of rare order", and contributed to various magazines and newspapers, among them Godey's Lady's Book, Louisville Journal, and others. She lived at Bellefonte, Alabama. Some of her poems are The Fever Sleep, a "prize poem", The Leper's Child, and Jewels for Lethe.[2] Sallie Ada Reedy Vance was born in Alabama but spent most of her life in Mississippi. She had a number of poems ready for publication when the War interrupted the plan to issue them in book form. The character of her poetry is subjective, her thoughts "finding their field of research in the infinitely varied human heart."[3] Mrs. Julia L. Keyes of Florence and Tuscaloosa wrote poetry from 1850 to 1859. Two of her poems are To My Absent Husband, and A Dream of Locust Dell, the latter poem being one for which she was awarded a prize in 1859. After the war Mrs. Keyes and her family moved to Brazil, feeling that they could not live in the South under Northern rule.[4]

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1. Library of Southern Literature, Vol IV, pp. 1641-1644
2. Raymond, Ida Southland Writers, Vol. II, pp. 596-605
3. Ibid. pp.609-615
4. Ibid. pp. 561-567

CHAPTER IV

CIVIL WAR VERSE

During the Civil War period practically all the verse produced, not alone in Alabama but in the whole South, belongs under the classification of occasional poetry. Verse writing during this period was necessarily limited. The attention and activity of the people were centered around the war, with its hardships, victories, reverses, suffering, and terrible sorrow. Practically all the energy of Alabama and the South was devoted to the cause of the Confederacy, expending itself in the more practical activities necessitated by a state's moral struggle for existence. Every thought and attitude was influenced by the War; every effort was actuated by the War in some manner. Therefore, it is but natural that any verse written during or just after this period should be concerned almost exclusively with the issues and incidents of the period; and because of this fact must come under the classification of occasional poetry.

The probable permanent value of occasional poetry is small. For one thing, because it is occasional verse, the themes are limited to the narrow scope of the occasion, whatever the occasion may be, a war, the death of someone, an historical incident, or what not. The interest of future readers will not be held by the occasional theme alone, however potent its sway may be over contemporary readers. In order to be of lasting value there must be some lasting quality which makes the theme, or subject, incidental. The writer must take the occasion as a spring-board, so to speak, a point of departure for the expression of some novel idea, for the promulgation of some interesting philosophy or for the singing of some beautiful song. Wordworth's poem, Elegiac Stanzas, rep-

resents an occasional piece which has lasting value. It can be understood and enjoyed for its beauty and its message of comfort even without knowing that it was written as a tribute to Wordsworth's brother who was lost at sea. His sonnet, On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic, will always be read as long as there are those who grieve when anything "which once was great is passed away", the reason for this being not at all connected with the Venetian Republic. Similarly Coleridge's France, an Ode and Tennyson's Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, though occasional poems, have qualities of permanence entirely aside from the occasions for their being written. It is to be regretted that most of the Civil War poetry written in Alabama is not of the type of these poems to which reference has been made. Most of them depend too much on the occasion for their claim to permanent recognition, and as a consequence, not many of them are well known today, even in Alabama. Therefore, in discussing the verse of this period, it is well to remember that it is occasional poetry and should be judged by the occasion.[1]

It is the tendency of nearly all the contemporary critics of this period ot overestimate the value of the period's productions. This fact is not hard to understand. The critics themselves were too near in time to the incidents described, and the issued recounted, for a cool and unbiased appraisal of values. They had themselves passed through the trying experiences of the War, and there was a tendency to speak highly of anyone who would write of these experiences. The intense feeling of loyalty, than which there is no finer example than that among Southerners, carried over even into the field of literary criticism. Consequently, the student

1. See, Moses, M. J. Literature of the South, p. 548

of this period finds perhaps the most amiable set of critics he will ever encounter. Another reason for these complimentary commentators is probably that, as had been the case a decade earlier, the South was afraid of criticism.[1]

The verse of this period can be divided into two parts, (1) that serious and bona fide poetry written by such poets as Father Ryan, Henry Lynden Flash, A. J. Requier, Mrs. I. M. P. Ockenden, and others, and (2), that occasional verse originating in the army camps and back at home and written about some very often ridiculous incident connected with the War. This latter class is worthy of discussion, not because it is good verse, but because it is interesting and reflects the familiar states of mind of a people during a trying period and under very abnormal circumstances. Verse of this type, even though it is not good verse, is the best medium for the expression of these attitudes and states of mind. Therefore, though this type of verse writing cannot be included within the bounds of lasting poetry, it does deserve a place in a catholic discussion of verse writing in Alabama. Two examples of this type of verse will serve for illustration. Col. T. M. Wetmore of Livingston wrote several astounding pieces concerning strange expedients to which people in Alabama resorted during the War. The most remarkable of these is his Answer to Judge Haralson's Notice in a Selma Newspaper, which evoked a metrical reply from Judge Haralson, and a further poetic (?) comment from a Boston widow after the War. It is regretable that the nature of these poems is such that they cannot be printed with propriety. They all, but especially Col. Wetmore's, illustrate very fittingly how verse of this type reflects the familiar states of mind of a people under trying and pathetically amusing circumstances. Just exactly how the public

1. See, Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 268

reacted to situations such as the one Col. Wetmore celebrates in his poem could hardly be expressed in better form. It is interesting to have preserved familiar glimpses such as this one is. Col. Wetmore lived in Livingston for several years after his graduation from Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1841, and was prominent in the legal profession. He was at one time the law partner in Livingston of J. G. Baldwin, the author of Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi.[1] He wrote another ridiculous poem called Damfino, which was published in the newspapers. The Answer to Judge Haralson was never published, but enjoyed, nevertheless, a wide circulation. Mr. G. B. Toulmin of Mobile remembers and has set down a poem which was produced and sung by Alabama soldiers in a Federal prison camp in the North. This doggerel would be very silly were it not for the fact that it seems to be an example of the kind of thing which occupied the time of Alabama soldiers in Federal prison camps. There were a number of such verses in circulation which had been composed under similar conditions. On sending a copy of the poem, when requested to do so, Mr. Toulmin's young grand-daughter wrote,"... if this is the poem, I do not wonder that it has not been written about."

The verse of Father Abram Joseph Ryan of Mobile is by far the outstanding poetry of this period. In his war poetry Father Ryan rises to the greatest heights which he attained. He wrote these poems always on the spur of the moment, under the stress of the intense feeling which the occasion called up within him. Then he felt intensely and wrote impetuously fired with the gripping nature of his subject, inspired by the sublime chivalry which he saw and by the deep pathos of the grief which his people were ex-

1. Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, 1897-98, VolII, p67

periencing. In these poems there is the spirit of the inspired warrior rather than that of the sanctified priest,[1] and it is this spirit which made the Southern reader thrill at his patriotic measures and weep at the sad beauty of his singing.

Father Ryan's poetry other than his war poems is thought by some critics to be characterized by a profound mysticism. Though some may feel this to be true, the mysticism seems rather to be achieved simply by much reference to the ritual of the Roman Catholic service and not especially to the mystic character of the writer. In some cases these poems are so full of allusions to the church service that they amoung to hardly more than mere paraphrasing. Consequently, this class of Father Ryan's work is not especially remarkable and will certainly not last so long as his war poetry. It has also faults which it holds in common with the earlier Southern writers, as well as with the writers of the period to which these verses belong. These poems, unlike the war poems which were written during the War, were produced later during the time of Reconstruction. There is in them too much of the obvious, too much strained artificality, triteness, and lack of originality and variety.

The Conquered Banner is the greatest poem which Father Ryan wrote. Even today Southerners are thrilled by it, and those who know little or nothing about the traditions of the South can sense, from reading this poem, something of the tense emotional state in the South during the War, and something of the deep affection which Southerners had for "the lost cause". The poem was written by Father Ryan in Knoxville, Tennessee,

1. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 350

where he was stationed with his regiment, just at the close of the War. When the news of the surrender reached Knoxville, a friend came to announce that the cause of the Confederacy was lost. The poet says that he bowed his head upon his table and wept bitterly for a long time. Then he seized a piece of brown wrapping paper, and, under the stress of his great emotion expressed his feelings in words. The next morning he forgot the lines which he had written the night before and went away when his regiment left Knoxville that day. But his landlady in Knoxville found the poem and sent it to a Louisville newspaper in which it was first published.[1] This poem is still a favorite in the South, where it is cherished, and properly so, the requiem of lost hopes and dead aspirations.

> "At the end of the Civil War, when the people of the South, draped in mourning for their warrior dead, stood as mourners might stand in some dim cathedral at the bier of their own and only one, a funeral dirge was chanted by an unknown voice from an unknown shrine. All heads bowed as the weird strains of The Conquered Banner, whose measure was taken from an old Gregorian hymn, drew a sob from every Southern heart. Only those who lived in that day---can properly estimate its power as it fell upon the victims of a fallen cause. The fact that this dirge was not destined to immortality because the state of soul to which it was addressed was ephemeral did not impair its effect at the moment it was uttered."[2]

Another noted war poem of Father Ryan is The Sword of Lee, which ranks perhaps next to The Conquered Banner. These two poems were written at about the same time[3] and are both filled with evidences of Father Ryan's genius at its best. These two poems, along with The March of the Matchless Dear, The Prayer of the South, C. S. A., and other poems of this kind are those which won for Father Ryan the title "Laureate of the Lost Cause."[4]

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1. Rutherford's Historical Notes, p. 5, Vol. IV, Dec.1926
2. Taylor, in Library of Southern Literature, pp. 4623-4636
3. Miss Rutherford's Historical Notes, p. 6, Vol. IV, Dec. 1926
4. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 349

Ashes of Glory[1] is A. J. Requier's greatest poem and deserves to rank almost as high as The Conquered Banner. The note in this poem is more exultant than in Father Ryan's poem, in which the tone is sad, mournful, and slow; but the thrill, the "feel" of its measures is not so gripping.

Henry Lynden Flash was born Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 20, 1835. After a few years his family moved South, where Flash grew up. He was educated at the Western Military Institute in Kentucky, and immediately after his graduation spent a year travelling in Italy. While in Italy he was the correspondent for the New Orleans Delta and The Montgomery Advertiser. When he returned from Italy in 1858, he lived in Mobile for several years and was one of the editors of the Mobile Register for a time.[2] Flash had always been interested in verse writing and had written considerable poetry before coming to Mobile. However, he observed that writers did not receive the recognition and encouragement in the South which he thought should be accorded them, and was led to the remark, "The South prefers potatoes to poetry". With this, says the record, he turned his attention to business.[3] But he did not confine his attention solely to business, despite his disappointed remark. The War came on, and Flash was moved to write some war poetry which attracted considerable attention at the time. He produced The Confederate Flag, Zollicoffer, and Leonidas Polk, all war poems of some high rank. One critic says of him, "he has given us some poetry that takes high rank by any standard and deserves a prominent place in literary annals."[4]

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1. Clarke, Jennie Songs of the South, pp. 99-100
2. Link, S. A., in The Nashville Banner, September 26, 1906
3. Ousley, in Library of Southern Literature, Vol. IV, p.1641
4. Ibid.

Mrs. Ina Porter (Henry) Ockenden is more noted as a journalist than as a poet, though she wrote some war poems which were widely circulated during the War. She was born in Tuscaloosa in 1848, but soon moved to Greenville, with which town she became identified practically for the remainder of her life. She is perhaps best known as a contributor to General Hill's magazine, The Land We Love, under her maiden name of Ina M. Porter. She also used a pen name "Ethel Hope" occasionally. Her chief war poem was written the second year of the War. This was in the form of a play called None But the Brave Deserve the Fair, and was produced in Mobile in the theatres there and in Greenville. Poems from this play, notably Lament for Mumford, were very popular and enjoyed a wide circulation. Other poems, not all of them war poems, which she produced are, Rimmer, Ocean Sighs, Miserere, Our Dead, and Dirge.[1] Mrs. Ockenden had a very varied and interesting career. She was twice married, first to Mr. George L. Henry in 1867, and later, after his death, to Mr. Ockenden. She was the first woman editor admitted to the Alabama Press Association, and at different times edited the Southern News, The South Alabamian, and the Greenville Advocate. Besides deserving mention as a poet, Mrs. Ockenden was a very prolific and forceful prose writer, and contributed to numerous newspapers and magazines. She died in 1917.[2]

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1. Raymond, Ida, Southland Writers, Vol. II, pp.584-593
2. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. IV.p.1294.

CHAPTER V

THE POETRY OF RECONSTRUCTION

POETS OF THE NINETIES.

It would be reasonable to expect that, out of a period so momentous, so trying, so epochal as the time known in Southern history as the "period of reconstruction", there would come a great literature. And Alabama, having been the first capital of the Confederacy, having suffered the burning of its University, having experienced keenly the indignities and asininities of carpet-bag and freedman rule, might well have been expected to produce some epic or group of lyrics to celebrate the unusual occasions of reconstruction. However, it is true, a fact attested largely by silence, that no great literature of any kind grew out of this period. This is true, not only of Alabama, but of the rest of the South as well. There is a reason must be that the practical difficulties were too great even for creative genius to overcome under the circumstances.[1] By this statement it is not intended to imply that the writers of Alabama found it absolutely impossible to write, rather they saw that their State needed practical re-adjustments and contributions which they were able to make. Therefore, they gave their time, energy, and genius to these things, leaving the field of literature for a more favored generation in a more propitious time. That ability was present is attested by the manner in which Alabama overcame the political and economic difficulties of the period; and that writers of high rank did come forward later

1. See Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 341

is attested by the work, in the field of poetry, of Martha Young, Samuel Minturn Peck, and others.

The poetry of reconstruction, as was the case with the Civil War verse, divides itself into two parts. There was (1) the popular, or vulgar, type similiar to that which grew up during the Civil War, illustrated during reconstruction by the verse of General Alpheus Baker of Eufaula, and (2) the small amount of serious verse which was written at odd moments by writers such as Warfield Creath Richardson, Thomas Q. Barnes, T. C. DeLeon, W. P. Chilton, Jr., and J. M. Oliver. Practically all of the work of these writers was occasional, and of very little merit. General Baker was a quaint and accomplished gentleman, and an ardent opponent of the carpet-bag regime. He was of the opinion that ridicule is a very effective political weapon, and one not to be despised when it seems the only availably one to use. When conditions in Eufaula grew too bad under the carpet-bag and negro rule, he would take a dry goods box to the public square, mount it, and "make fun" of the local government. He was an accomplised musician and had an excellent voice, which, coupled with his ability to express himself in very felicitous rhymes, enabled him to make his harangues very interesting. Besides this, he had a little reed organ which he would place upon his goods box, and which he would play as accompaniment to his home-made verses. He wrote a great number of verses about the political events of the period and sang them from his goods box, accompanied by the reed organ. It is said that these tactics actually helped to bring the scalawag rule to an end in his section. Verses of this type were written also by one of the daughters of Mr. Joseph Jenkins of Livingston, when Mr. Jenkins was arrested

and carried to Mobile because of opposition to the carpet-bag government. The same reasons for giving attention to this kind of verse can be advanced for this period as were given for the Civil War period. It seems legitimate to discuss this type here because it is interesting, it does not detract from the serious poets, and it is not the kind of verse which will be perpetuated otherwise.

Warfield Creath Richardson was born June 23, 1823, in Maysville, Kentucky. He attended Maysville Academy, where he was the school mate of U. S. Grant. After moving to Alabama, he entered the University and was graduated in 1843 with the A. B. degree, receiving the M. A. degree later in 1846. He received the Ph.D. degree from Alabama Polytechnic Institute and the LL.D from the University of Alabama. He was a teacher in various schools and colleges of the State, including the University, and Tuscaloosa Female Academy, of which he was president for two years, 1866-68.[1] His best poem is Gasper, a Romaunt, published in 1873. Other poems are The Fall of the Alamo and Semi-Centennial Ode.

Mrs. Mary Evelyn Moore Davis is one writer of the reconstruction period who did not confine herself to occasional pieces. Although her poems are marked by local color, they are not concerned with the War nor with the events of the period after the War. Rather they depict phases of negro life, or are concerned with native material found in Alabama. Mrs. Davis was born in Talladega in 1852 and published her first book of poems in 1870 at the age of seventeen. This was a volume called Minding the Gap and Other Poems. She published a poem in Harper's Weekly called Throwing the Wanga. This is a voodoo poem, depicting a phase of the negro's life

1. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. IV, p. 1437

not often described. The "wanga" is the voodoo spell. Other poems are Counsel, Going Out and Coming In, and The Passing of the Rose.[1] She published a second volume in 1872.[2]

Though a considerable amount of poetry of John Trotwood Moore is written about themes connected with Tennessee, Alabama can claim him because he was born here and received all his early training in this state, was an Alabama editor for several years, taught in Alabama schools for six years, establishing Moore Academy in Pineapple, and began his verse writing in Alabama through the columns of his newspaper the Marion Commonwealth. Two of his occasional poems were potent enough to bring about official action by the legislatures of Alabama and Tennessee. One of these, A Ballad of Emma Sansom, was read on the floor of the Alabama legislature and helped to secure a pension for her. The other, Sam Davis, concerning the hero scout of Tennessee, helped to bring about the erection of two monuments to Davis in Tennessee. Perhaps the best poem which Moore wrote is To a Sweet Pea. Two volumes of his poems have been published, Songs and Stories from Tennessee, and A Summer Hymnal, the latter appearing in 1901.[3] Moore belongs more properly among the writers of the nineties than in the period of reconstruction.

Thomas Cooper DeLeon was born in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1839 and died in Mobile March 19, 1914. He was educated at Georgetown College in Washington, D.C. and served in the Confederate army. He is more noted for his poems, of reminiscences, criticism, and historical sketches than for his poems, though

1. Smith, in Library of Southern Literature, Vol.III,pp.1273-78
2. Clark, Jennie, Songs of the South, pp. 320
3. Library of Southern Literature, Vol. VIII, p.3694

he did write some poetry. His chief contribution to poetry is his editing, in 1866, a Southern anthology called South Songs. Most of DeLeon's verse was published in magazines and newspapers. Because he was totally blind after 1903, he was called "blind laureate of the Lost Cause".[1]

W. P. Chilton, Jr., published Mansions of the Skies in 1875, Columbia, a National Poem and Acrostic on American Union in 1880. William Woodson Hendree, 1859-72, of Selma "wrote much and well during his short life".[2] His chief poem is a long dialect production with the title Mahs' Lewis' Last Ride. J. M. Oliver of Dadeville, a prominent lawyer of his time,[3] published Southern and Miscellaneous Poems in 1870. Thomas Q. Barnes published Southern and Miscellaneous Poems in 1886. These are nearly all poems of reconstruction, mainly laments and tributes to Confederate generals. There is one poem in this volume on Burial of Father Ryan. Most of the book is rather poor verse, mostly occasional poems suitable to be used at Confederate memorial exercises two decades ago. Mrs. Margaret Ellen Henry Ruffin published a book of poems in 1884. Sh is also the author of novels and of another volume John Gildart an heroic poem, being a War story. This poem was reviewed in the Sewanee Review in 1902, and this review was copied in the Birmingham News of June 14, 1902. The Agnostic and Other Poem by Niles Pierce appeared in 1884.

Mrs. Lillian Rozell Messenger is a poet of reconstructio who might have been classes as one of the War poets, but for an unfortunate accident which occurred during the War. Mrs. Messenger had published some verse under the pen name of Zena

1. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol.III, pp. 477-478
2. Clarke, Jennie, Songs of the South, p.323
3. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol. IV, p.1296

Clifton before the War in the Memphis Avalanche. Her work at this time, however, attracted little attention. During the War she wrote some verse and had a large journal containing her poems, mostly lyrics, at her home in Tuscumbia. When the Federal troops plundered Tuscumbia they carried off this journal of Mrs. Messenger's poems. General Dodge attempted to recover the manuscript but was unsuccessful and the poems were lost to the world. After the War, Mrs. Messenger contributed many beautiful poems to the Louisville Journal, to the Memphis newspapers, and to other periodicals. Some of her chief works are The Vision of Gold, and Other Poems, published in 1886, The Old Wharf, The Iconoclast, and Denial.[1]

Of the poets of the nineties (an arbitrary classification made largely for convenience) those who are perhaps most significant are Julia S. Tutwiler, Mrs. Kate Slaughter McKinney, Mrs. Mary McNeil, Fenollosa, Mrs. Belle R. Harrison, and Samuel Lowric Robertson. These writers do not have much in common either as regards subject matter or general style. They are grouped together because their work appeared at about the same time.

Julia Strudwick Tutwiler did not devote much of her time to the writing of verse, but that which she did write is important and deserves attention.[2] Miss Tutwiler was an eminent educator in the State, having secured the admission of women to the State University, served as President of the Livingston Normal School, and worked for education in other ways. She was also a noted temperance worker and advocated prison reform. Her chief poem is the lyric Alabama, which has been set to music and adopted as the State song. If she had done nothing else,

1. Raymond, Ida Southland Writers, pp. 554-559
2. Key, Louise, Literary Productions in Alabama Since the

the authorship of this poem alone would give her a place in the history of Alabama. Three other poems are Dixie Now, The Southern Yankee Doodle, and Duty, the last named used for the Lee centennial in 1909.

In 1898 Mrs. Belle Richardson Harrison of Tuscaloosa published a volume of verse called Poems. This little book contains some very lovely Lyrics, including some written in "darky dialect", as the author expresses it. The publisher's preface to the book has an excellent characterization of the poems. "There is unmistakable intensity in these poems showing clearly an abullition direct from the heart of the author. Some are grave, some are gay, some are phases of Southern life in clever dialect; but no matter what the subject or theme the entire collection is delightful."[1] Mrs. Harrison has had some poems published in Judge, New Orleans Times-Democrat, The Boston Transcript, Current Literature and other newspapers and magazines of prominence.

Mrs. Mary McNeil Fenollosa of Mobile has written some verse under the pseudonym of Sidney McCall. A number of her poems deal with subjects related to Japan, where she lived for many years. Also, a great deal of her work deals with native Alabama material. Two of her volumes of poems are Out of the West, and Children's Verses on Japanese Subjects published in 1899.

Mrs. Kate Slaughter McKinney of Montgomery has written under the pen name of Katydid. Her volume of poems published in 1887 is called Katydid's Poems. Mrs. McKinney has written novels, also and contributes to magazines and newspapers. She

1. Harrison, Mrs. Belle R., Poems, p. 9

had some poems included in an independent anthology of recent date and has won several prizes for the best poems in the Federation of Women's Clubs contests.

Samuel Lowrie Robertson was born in 1838 and made his home in Birmingham for a number of years. In 1894 he published a book of poems called Dora, Or On the Border. This book does not seem to be very significant. In 1908 appeared the volume Gulf Songs, which contains some of the author's best work.

Other poets who might be included in this period are Andrew M. McConnell, who wrote Echoes from the Heart in 1895; Anne Bozeman Lyon of Mobile, who has written verse for magazines and newspapers; Helen Keller, deaf, dumb, and blind writer, author of free verse poem The Song of the Stone Wall; Mrs. Margaret Ellen O'Brien Davis; Louis DeV. Chaudron, who wrote Madame La Marquise in 1892; and Mary Gordon Duffee, quaint in manner of life and mode of dress, whose best known poem is call Cleopatra.

CHAPTER VI

MISS MARTHA YOUNG

Miss Martha Young of Greensboro is a present day example of the aristocratic writers who have lived and worked in Alabama. Miss Young was born on her father's country place near Greensboro, and has made Greensboro her home ever since. Her ancestry is of the most distinguished in the South. She is a grand-daughter of Dr. Henry Tutwiler, the first M. A. graduate from the University of Virginia and the founder of the famous Green Springs School in Hale County. Among the number of her distinguished forbears may be mentioned Governor Samuel Ashe of North Carolina, Sir James Yeamans, founder of Charleston, and Captain John Young of Virginia, a noted officer of the American revolution. With such a background as this, and with such a setting as Greensboro, which is, in atmosphere and tradition, distinctly Southern, Miss Young is peculiarly fitted to do that which she set out to do, namely, to interpret the life of the Souther plantation and to sing songs of the South, both the old and the new.

The first of her work to appear in print was published in the New Orleans Times-Democratic under the pen name of Eli Sheppard. She continued to use this pen name for her first volume of poems and with a few other of her poems, but she stopped using it with the publication of her later books. Among her books may be mentioned Plantation Songs, published by R. H. Russell in 1901, Minute Dramas, published in 1921, Behind the Dark Pines, issued in 1912, In a Southern Garden, Fifty Folk Lore Tales, and Plantation Bird Legends, which appeared in 1902. Plantation Songs for My Lady's Banjo, and

volume with pictures from life illustrating the various negro characters described in it. Another book, Plantation Bird Legends, is very cleverly illustrated by J. M. Conde.

Apart from the excellence of her writings, which is considerable, Miss Young has done a distinct service to Southern literature by bringing forcibly to the attention of Northern editors and critics the fact that poems, stories, and other literature are being produced in the South. It is hard to overestimate the importance of Miss Young's influence in this respect.[1] The tendency seems to have been since the Civil War to disregard the South in the field of letters as well as in other ways. Miss Young, whose popularity was very great in the North, did much to change this situation. Comments of editors in prominent newspapers of the country show that this is true. The Springfield (Mass.) Republican, in a review of Plantation Songs, says,

> "That a negro song may be as sweet and attractive as if one of a more favored race were singing, has been proven by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. Chestnut has shown that romance is as true with the black as with the white. Joel Chandler Harris has done in this line much to illume these features of the negro's character. Nothing has been done in this line before quite so good as this volume of plantation songs, by Eli Sheppard (Martha Young)."

Again, the Pittsburgh (Pa.) Gazette thus characterized Miss Young's second volume,

> "What the Brothers Grimm did, taking from the lips of unlettered peasants the folk-tales of the fore-time and setting them down for the delight of children in all ages, has been done by Martha Young in the Plantation Bird Songs."[2]

A further indication of her popularity and wide reception

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1. Professor Carl Carmer in lecture to English 117.
2. Lock, A. R., in Library of Southern Literature, Vol.XIII, pp. 6043-6045

which she received is seen in the number of first class magazines and newspapers which published her poems. Harper's Bazaar published the delightful little lyric, Guess This. The Gentle Maiden appeared in New York Times, as have a large number of her poems. Clothed and in Right Mind was printed in the Brooklyn Life. The Red Winged Blackbird came out in the Outlook, and the Home Journal of New York published An Easter Dawn and A Thought.

Plantation Songs, being Miss Young's first book, is perhaps her most important book in point of influence. Nothing quite like it has ever appeared before. It charm and simplicity of style took its public by storm and earned for Alabama the distinction of having produced another poet of national reputation. The book contains true pictures of negro life on the old Southern plantations, from the view point principally of conditions after the Civil War, though the negro's habits of life on many of the large plantations remained largely after the War as it had been before the War, especially after the disturbances of reconstruction had died away. The delineation of the negro character is expressed in unusually authentic dialect, an achievement by no means easy of accomplishment. The introductory poems which are not written in dialect have decided poetic merit. One of them beginning "Dark are the churches that dot the Black Belt,

Dark with the painting of weather and time:.."

creates an atmosphere of reverence for the poems which follow, in Hymns of the Black Belt. The feeling created by this poem does not leave one throughout the reading of the section, and tinges with seriousness the negro's unconscious humor in some of the "hymns". These poems are excellent interpre-

tations of the negro's religious life, the interpretation made, not by writing about the negro in his religious experience, but by presenting the negro himself singing his hymns in all their quaint and serious solemnity. These poems are probably the best interpretation of this phase of the negro character which will be found in the literature of the South.

Miss Young's poetry is distincly related to her locality. She is one of the few nationally recognized Alabama poets who have identified their work with their locality, both as regards subject matter and as regards residence.[1] In this respect she is in marked contrast with Clement Wood, for example who writes about Alabama but does not live in the State. The fact that she writes about Alabama subjects and at the same time lives in the State, makes her more truly an Alabama poet. The Montgomery Journal has published a good appreciation of her poetry, which according to the Journal,

> "is as fresh as the breath of the crab-apple blossom in spring-time. As Herrick shrined in meter the rural life of Devon hundreds of years ago for the delight of posterity, the author of Plantation Songs has then gathered and put away in literary lavender, with a picturesque touch, the gay and pathetic, the humorous and quaint scenes of negro life in Alabama fields and swamps of today." [2]

"Her dialect verse," wrote Uncle Remus, "is the best written since Irwin Russell died. Some of it is the best ever written."[3] One of Miss Young's characteristics found in some of her poetry is her ability as a "jokesmith". "She engages the negro in conversation, and, by her artful wit, she brings

1. Martin, M. B. Analytical Study of Writings of Martha Young p. 10
2. Lock, A. R. Library of Southern Literature, Vol.XIII, pp.6043-6045
3. Ibid.

forth a joke from him which later she turns into a delightful dialect poem."[1] In her volume, Plantation Bird Legends, written partly in verse, partly in prose, Miss Young has done for the negro bird folk-lore what Joel Chandler Harris, through the personality of Uncle Remus, did for the negro animal folk-lore. These legends are written in characteristic style, preserving in charming form the bird folk stories known to the negores. Although she is more widely known for her negro dialect poems and stories, Miss Young's writing has by no means been confined to dialect. She has written other poems of high merit, which, she says, she really prefers to some of her dialect poems. She realizes, however, that most people think of her in connection with her dialect writings, for these, as she delightfully expresses it, have been the source of most of her funds, if not her fortune.[2] Some of her poems, not dialect, which she considers among her best, are Figs, recently awarded the prize in the Federation of Women's Clubs contest; Flowers of France, written in memory of Lieut. R. W. Murphy; An Easter Dawn and A Thought, published in the Home Journal of New York; The Sword of God; The Limit and Limitless, free verse poems awarded prizes by the Federation of Women's Clubs; To the Four O'clocks in My Garden; The Blossoming of the Magnolia; The Yellow Hammer; a group of sonnets; and several poems written, as the author phrases it, "in lighter vein".

In personality Miss Young is even more charming and lovely than her poems, if that be possible. She is "peculiarly gifted in the oral interpretation of her own productions. Her rendering of the negro dialect has been pronounced well-nigh perfect, and her readings in general give delight to

both cultivated and popular audiences. Whether to a fashionable audience at the Waldorf-Astoria, a scholarly gathering in some university hall, to children in the public schools, or to a general audience, she brings fun and pathos, universal satisfaction and pleasure. A part of the impression she makes is due to her graceful, petite, and attractive person. Her manners are charming, her conversation brilliant.[1]

Recently two young men went to Greensboro to call on Miss Young. Her setting is almost ideally what one would expect from a reading of her poems and from a knowledge of her personality. She makes her home in a lovely old Southern colonial house, with tall white columns, stately and proud, gleaming through a grove of natural Southern trees and foliage. The very approaches to the house seem to exude the essence of Southern atmosphere and tradition as they lead up to the front door, which is hid from the road by actual hedges of cape jessamine. Miss Young received her visitors in her sitting room study, with its fine old furniture and quaint, high secretary, before which one can picture the poet at work. For about half an hour she conversed in animated and delightful fashion about poetry in Alabama, local news, and, when coaxed to do so, a little about herself and her poems, telling interesting anecdotes connected with people she had known. The two visitors left with a delightful impression of a very lovely lady who sings very lovely songs.

In the field of dialect poetry, Miss Howard Weeden of Huntsville is another writer who tells of the negro life as she knew it. Miss Weeden's work, however, was confined

1. Locke, A. R. , In Library of Southern Literature, Vol.XIII pp. 6043-6045

principally to the interpretation of the ante-bellum negro. Not so versatile as Miss Young, nor so potent in her influence, Miss Weeden nevertheless approaches Miss Young in authenticity of dialect rendering. Her books are Shadows on the Wall, 1896, Bandanna Ballads, 1899; Songs of the Old South, 1901; and Old Voices, 1904. On these thin volumes rests her claim to a small but enduring fame. Miss Weeden's portraits and poems have caught the spirit of the ante-bellum negro and presented it with simplicity and truth. Her greatest contribution is her interpretations of that happy relationship which existed between the slave and his master. Her technique is simple, direct, faithful to the spirit of her themes. Although her poems, all written in dialect, do not lack charm and sincerity, there is nothing world-wide in her work.[1]

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1. Gamble, F. P. in Library of Southern Literature Vol. XIII, pp. 5721-5724

CHAPTER VII

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK

Just as Meek was Alabama's greatest ante-bellum poet, Father Ryan her greatest poet, and Miss Martha Young her greatest dialect writer and interpreter of negro plantation life, Samuel Minturn Peck is her greatest lyric poet. Because his poems have a more general appeal, he is perhaps the most important poet which Alabama has produced. Certainly he is one of the most charming to be found in the whole South, and one of the most widely read. Meek was a writer of lyrics, also, and some of them very delightful lyrics, but Meek did not devote the most of his time and talent to verse writing. He did not make a very careful study of the art of writing poetry, with the result that some of his poems have elements of triteness, lack of polish, and a rather stilted atmosphere. Samuel Minturn Peck, on the contrary, has given a great deal of his time to a serious study of verse writing, and has, consequently, achieved a polish, smoothness, ease, and regularity which are characteristic of the matter craftsman. This is one reason that his poems are greater than those of Meek. His work is different from that of Father Ryan or Miss Martha Young, and therefore cannot be compared properly with the productions of these two poets. Each of them was supreme in his field, war poetry for Father Ryan, and negro dialect for Miss Young. His claim to superiority over these poets would lie in the fact that his poems are more general in their themes, treatment and appeal. Peck is generally conceded to be the greatest poet of Alabama.[1]

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1. Miss Martha Young in her letters.
Kay, Louise. Literary Productions in Alabama Since Civil

Samuel Minturn Peck was born in Tuscaloosa on November 4, 1854. His father and mother were people of the highest culture and surrounded him with every educational influence. He attended the public schools of Tuscaloosa during the Civil War and entered the University of Alabama in 1871. He was graduated from the University in 1876 with the degree of Master of Arts, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1919, and received his honorary Litt. D. degree at Commencement, May, 1927. He took graduate courses in criticism and literature at Columbia and, also, at the Alliance Française in Paris. More to gratify his parents than because he wished to do so, he studied medicine and was graduated with the M. D. degree from Bellevue Medical College in the city of New York in 1879.[1] However, he never practiced medicine, and it is said that he objects to the use of the medical title with his name. His father, who was Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court 1868-73, was not especially pleased with his son's devotion to poetry, but after reading Cap and Bells, the first volume of Peck's work to be published, he was very well satisfied and did not offer any further objections to a literary career for the young poet.

The first poem for which Peck received pay was The Mock Orange, which was published in The Youth's Companion. About the same time The Independent accepted and paid for A Legend, which appeared in that magazine. Then his lighter verse began appearing regularly in The Century. In 1886 the first volume of his poems, Cap and Bells, appeared. This book, which went into six editions, had a very kindly reception from the critics and from the public, although there is perhaps some truth in the saying of the New York Critic that the book

1. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography p. 1335 Vol. IV

"Smelled rather too much of the ball-room". This volume contains many poems written in the various French forms, a fact which detracts from the work as a whole, perhaps, though it gave the poet excellent practice in the writing of these conventionalized verse forms, thereby perfecting his technique. Soon after the publication of Cap and Bells, the poet began writing other poems which were later published in 1892 in a book called Rings and Love Knots. It is in this volume that the Grapevine Swing was published. Rhymes and Roses came off the press in 1895, almost at the same time with Fair Women of Today. The Golf Girl was published in 1899 and Alabama Sketches, a book of short stories, in 1902. Maybloom and Myrtle, a volume of poems divided into four parts, appeared in 1910. These four divisions are light verse, lyrics of love, lyrics of nature, and song and shadow. The Autumn Trail was published in 1925. This is the poet's latest volume.

The Grapevine Swing has done more to make Peck well known than any other of his poems. Anyone who knows about him at all knows The Grapevine Swing. It is a good lyric, and by far the most loved poem which he has written. Col. T. C. McCorvey says of it, "Nowhere else in American literature will be found a more exquisite lyric than The Grapevine Swing." And Col. McCorvey goes on to say that, though the worth and lasting value of a great deal of Peck's poetry have yet to be determined, this lyric is one which the world will not soon willingly let die.[1]

THE GRAPEVINE SWING

When I was a boy on the old plantation,
  Down by the deep bayou,
The fairest spot of all creation,
  Under the arching blue;

1. McCorvey, T. C. in Library of Southern Literature, Vol.IX,

When the wind came over the cotton and corn,
   To the long slim loop I'd spring
With brown feet bare, and hat-brim torn
   And swing in the grapevine swing.

Swinging in the grapevine swing,
Laughing where the wild birds sing,
        I dream and sigh
        For days gone by
Swinging in the grapevine swing.

Out--o'er the water-lilies bonnie and bright,
   Back--to the moss-grown trees;
I shouted and laughed with a heart as light
   As a wild-rose tossed by the breeze.
The mocking-bird joined in my reckless glee,
   I longed for no angel's wing,
I was just as near heaven as I wanted to be
   Swinging in the grapevine swing.

Swinging in the grapevine swing,
Laughing where the wild birds sing
        Oh, to be a boy
        With a heart full of joy,
Swinging in the grapevine swing!

I'm weary at noon, I'm weary at night,
   I'm fretted and sore of heart
And care is sowing my locks with white
   As I wend through the fevered mart.
I'm tired of the world with the pride and pomp,
   And fame seems a worthless thing,
I'd barter it all for one day's romp,
   And swing in the grapevine swing.

Swinging in the grapevine swing,
Laughing where the wild birds sing,
        I would I were away
        From the world to-day,
Swinging in the grapevine swing.

In Cap and Bells and in his earlier poems published in magazines, Samuel Minturn Peck had acquired a considerable reputation as a writer of vers de societe, and rightly so, for he had written in the society verse fashion and about society verse topics rather largely. In Rhymes and Roses the poet tries to do something better than society verse. However, this

effort was not fully appreciated, for the public and especially the critics had become accustomed to place a label on his poems as soon as they appeared. The poet remarked ruefully that if one gives a dog a bad name, the bad name sticks, no matter how good the dog may become.[1] While, of course, this illustration does not apply fully in this case, it does give an idea of the general notion concerning Peck's verse. Besides the books which he has published, Peck has had his work accepted by many leading magazines and newspapers. Among these may be mentioned The Century Magazine, The Boston Transcript, the New York Tribune, the Philadelphia Ledger, Harper's Magazine, The Independent, The Youth's Companion, and the New York Sun. As a result of this wide-spread popularity and circulation, he became probably the best known writer of verse in the post-bellum period of Southern Literature.[2] When he had just begun to write, having published only Cap and Bells in book form, he was represented in Stedman and Hutchinson's Library of American Literature.

The Autumn Trail, Peck's latest book, is different from his other volumes, the difference being largely in the point of view. In Cap and Bells the first book, the keynote, rather frivolous and frolicksome, is expressed thus,

> "Beneath the Cap and Bells today,
> With lightsome heart I lead the way
> To quips and games and jollity."

In Rhymes and Roses the poet tries to do something more serious than in his first volume, though still the prevailing note is that of gaiety, and youthful exuberance. The tone of Maybloom and Myrtle is very similar to that of

1. McCorvey, T. C. in Library of Southern Literature pp. 3951-56
2. Ibid.

the former volumes, as its little foreword indicates.

" I have been Maying,
Sighing while straying -
Sighing that all that is lovely is fleet;
What I bring hither,
Take ere it wither;
Maybloom and Myrtle I lay at your feet."

And so in most of the other poems. But The Autumn Trail strikes a new note, one not heard before in the poet's singing. The name of the collection indicates it, as does the eight line introductory stanza,

"Winding down the autumn trail,
Still there's much that's fair to see;
Fragrant odors scent the gale,
Singing yet are bird and bee;
Still the purple hills afar L
Lure me onward as I roam -
But, alas, the evening star
Soon will call the wanderer home."

There is an undertone of sweet sadness throughout this volume which gives it a uniformity some of Peck's other books lack. The style is still decidedly Samuel Minturn Peck, perhaps a trifle too sentimental, perhaps a little too doux, but always lovely, with clearness and simplicity of imagery, thought and diction. The poem Faith is the best poem in the collection.

Concerning his purpose in poetry Peck says of his own work, "I have sought beauty, grace, and melody rather than strength."[1] In the light of this statement, the appreciation of Peck and his style by Col. T. C. McCorvey can be understood.

> "In the earlier days of Dr. Peck's literary career, he was especially fascinated by the society verse of William A. Praed, Austin Dobson, and Frederick Locker - of whom the last mentioned was his chief love. While he read and admired 'the bards sublime', like Shakespeare and Milton, his individual taste always drew him nearer to the minor poets of our own tongue, like Herrick and Suckling and Moore. He was somewhat afraid of such poets as Byron and Poe whose weird spell

> has blighted many weaker singers; for keen sensitiveness to their subtle charms affect their votaries with their undoubted mannerisms. He has always loved Wordsworth, whose sane, out-of-door conceits could never throw the baleful influence of imitation around any young verse writer. And here is to be found one of the excellences of Dr. Peck's work. He is not an imitator. While he never aspired to build lofty rhymes, one cannot find the echo of some stronger bard in the notes which he utters." [1]

In Literary Productions in Alabama Since the Civil War, there is the following characterization of Dr. Peck.

> "Samuel Minturn Peck has the distinction of being Alabama's greatest lyric poet. In every poetic sentiment he is Southern, indeed, almost Alabamian. His dislike for long and unusual words and his inherent aversion to extravagant language account for the simplicity and clearness of his work. The nature which he describes in his poetry is the nature of the Southern States. He sings it out with the enthusiasm of an intimate, loving friend; the sad and the melancholy being notably absent from his work." [2]

Peck does not try to sing grandly, he tries to sing with sweetness and beauty. He does not try to be ponderous and heavy, but graceful and light. His poetry has the "lyric quality which is refined, but which escapes the note of great song." [3] "He has written chiefly for the love of his art, and the consequence is a rare finish in his work." [4]

Dr. Peck is at present living in Tuscaloosa in the old Peck home on the edge of the city, a place quaint in its rare old charm, with its grapevine swing, its maybloom and crape myrtle, its roses and oldtime flowers, and its view of the sunset growing dim over the autumn trail.

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1. McCorvey, T. C. in Library of Southern Literature Vol.IX, (pp.3951-56
2. Key, Louise, Literary Productions in Alabama Since the Civil War, Chapter 3, p. 2
3. Moses, M. J. The Literature of the South, p. 472
4. McCorvey, T. C. in Library of Southern Literature, Vol. IX, pp.3951-56

CHAPTER VIII

TWENTIETH CENTURY POETS.

VERSE WRITING IN THE COLLEGES.

There are several twentieth century Alabama poets who show promise of future development. It is not possible yet to determine the extent of their promise, nor to make an adequate appraisal of their value as poets, since most of them have just begun their verse writing careers. For this reason only brief comments on their work will be attempted here. Of this group Clement Wood is perhaps the best known at present. Wood was born at Tuscaloosa on September 1, 1888. He was graduated from the University of Alabama in 1901 with the A. B. degree, and from Yale University in 1911 with the LL.B. He has practiced law to some extent, but has given much of his time to literary work, principally verse writing. Some of the work of Clement Wood is excellent, but most of it seems to stop just short of being great. Furthermore, he has been accused by Louis Utermeyer of a tendency to plagiarize the ideas of his confères. If ever he conquer this tendency he may produce a volume of his own.[1] However true this criticism may be, Wood's poems give the impression of being good, but second rate. His principal volumes of poems are Glad of Earth, published in 1917; The Earth Turns South, in 1918; and Jehovah, in 1920. The first two books contain some poems which deal with Alabama subject matter in more or less lyric style. Jehovah, which is one long poem, deals with the Children of Israel and a strange tribe of people who lived on Mt. Sinai. Besides these three volumes and a volume of criticism, Clement Wood has published numerous poems in magazines.

1. Untermeyer, Louis New Era in American Poetry, p. 354

Singing Shadows was published in Scribner's, Sparta to Troy in The Bookman, Eagle Sonnets in the Nation, while other poems appeared in Survey, The Saturday Evening Post, the Independent, the New Republic, Current Opinion, and other periodicals of high rank.

Lawrence H. Lee, Jr. is a Montgomery poet who lives now in New York and is editor of Sea Stories magazine. While yet in High School he wrote a book of poems and had the volume published privately in Montgomery. He has since improved wonderfully in style and technique and has written numerous poems for magazines. Hound in Leash appeared in The Bookman in 1925. In 1926 The Literary Digest published Draft Horses, and Harper's published For My Lady's Birthday. Most of Lawrence Lee's poetry is distincly lyrical. He has also the unusual power to say a very great deal in few words. His power of condensation is remarkable and gives a delightful quality to his style. He has written some lovely children's verse, and plans very soon to publish two volumes of poems, one serious verse, and one for children. In the opinion of one Alabama critic, Lawrence Lee is the greatest poet that Alabama has produced.[1] When the American Mercury published a section of Alabama poets in the October, 1926, issue, Lawrence Lee was represented by two poems, The Tigress and The Singing Hills.

Miss Zitella Cocke of Marion has published some very popular verse in magazines and books. She had the unusual distinction of being elected a member of the Author's club in London in 1905. Some of her work has been translated into foreign languages, which is an evidence of her popularity.[2] The Grasshopper's Hop appeared in 1901 and was accorded favorable reception. It was followed in 1904 by

1. Prof. Charles Harrison, English Dept. University of Alabama.
2. Owen, T. M. Alabama History and Biography, Vol.III,p.366

a volume called The Doric Reed, and in 1905 by The Cherokee Rose. Though her work appeared in the early twentieth century, Miss Cocke is better classed among the writers of the nineties; she is more like them in style and in spirit. Another writer about whom this could be said is Clifford A. Lanier, brother of Sidney Lanier. He published a volume called Apollo and Keats on Browning and Other Poems.[1]

Carl Lamson Carmer was born at Cortland, New York, in 1893. He was graduated from Hamilton College in New York, where he was a friend and classmate of John V. A. Weaver, the celebrated writer in the "American" language. While in college at Hamilton, Mr. Carmer was interested in verse writing and wrote poems for college and other magazines from time to time. In The Bookman for August, 1925, he published a Sonnet. Recently he published a negro sermon in sonnet form, also in The Bookman. The American Mercury in the October, 1926 issue, printed his poem called Alabama Twilight.

E. Hudson Strode of Demopolis is professor of English in the University of Alabama. Though he professes not to be a poet, there have been published in The Bookman, and elsewhere, several of his poems. They are, as a rule, little semi-grotesques, usually the striking expression of some strange idea, or the vivid presentation of an impression. In The Bookman have appeared two such poems, God's Medals, and Consolation.

Julian Rayford is a young poet from whom, according

1. The South in the Building of the Nation, Vol. XII, p.53

to some observers,[1] some fine poems may be expected. Rayford is at present a high school student in Birmingham. He was born at Mobile in 1908 and began to write as a junior in the Mobile High School. He owes much to the counsel of his teacher, Miss Elizabeth Coleman, who first noticed his poetic talent and gave him needed encouragement. His first little "book" was a collection of his poems, typed and hand-bound, which he made for Miss Coleman. In the American Mercury collection of Alabama poets are found two of his poems, The Old Man Whittles, and Dusty Bottles.

Alfred Battle Beale was born in Tuscaloosa in 1879 and is now associate editor of the Birmingham News. He has not given much of his time to the writing of verse, though he has written some. When very young, he published a volume called Poems. This early volume contains very little of merit. Since then he has written for magazines and newspapers. To an Old Man Sitting in a Chair appeared in the section of Alabama poets published in the American Mercury.

There are two negro poets who deserve mention in a discussion of Alabama poets. Marion Cuthbert is principal of Burrell Normal School in Florence. She has published three poems in The Woman's Press of New York; these poems are Desire, The Hills of Gex, and In the Refuges Barracks. Waverly Turner Carmichael is the other negro poet who has received recognition for his work. In James Weldon Johnson's volume, The Book of American Negro Poetry are found two of his poems, Winter is Coming, and Keep me, Jesus, Keep Me, and a sketch of his life. Carmichael is "a young man who has never been out of his native State of Alabama until several years ago when he entered one of the summer courses in Harvard University.

1. Prof. Charles Harrison, Prof. Carl Carmer, Miss Elizabeth

His education up to that time had been very limited and he had endured poverty and hard work. His verses came to the attention of one of the Harvard professors. He has since published a volume, From the Heart of a Folk. He served with the 367th Regiment, 'The Buffaloes', during the World War, and saw active service in France. At present he is employed as a postal clerk in Boston, Massachusetts.[1]

There are a number of other Alabama writers who should perhaps be mentioned. Mrs. Lollie Wylie published Arcades in 1916, and later, Morning Glory, and Other Poems. Mrs. Mary Ware of Birmingham deals chiefly with Alabama subjects in Poems, 1911. Mrs. Laura S. (Stannie Lee) Webb is the author of Heart Leaves. Dr. Orion T. Dosier published Chips and Whet-Stones in 1916. Other volumes by the same author are Poems Patriotic. Foibles and Fancies of the Times (1894) and A Galaxy of Southern Heroes. The Paragon Press of Montgomery issued Magdalene, and Other Poems, by Annie Arrington Tyson, in 1912. J. W. Overall and Mrs. Mary E. Pope each published a volume called Poems. R. B. McEachin wrote Youthful Days, and Other Poems. Mrs. Cornelia Elizabeth Moore, Voices of the Heart, (1914) Lucine Finch, Two in Arcadia (1907), and Butterfly (1912); Col. M. V. Moore, Rhymes of Southern Rivers; C. J. Chilton, Song of the Southland, (1911). Mrs. J. A. Cornelius of Birmingham is a writer of verse and connected with The Poetry Magazine of Birmingham. Scottie McKenzie Frazier, of Dothan has published several volumes of verse. Among them are Fagots of Fancy in Free Verse (1920), The Guest's Prayer (1923) and Things that Are Mine (1922) Russell Smith of Tuscaloosa is a young poet of some promose.[2] He has written

1. Johnson, J. W. The Book of American Negro Poetry, p.210
2. Grandson of William Russell Smith of Tuscaloosa, Author of College Musings, etc. See Chapter 1

several poems, most of them sonnets, which have appeared in the series of Some University of Alabama Poets, University anthology. Ruth McClellan is the author of Fancy, and Evening; Iver Granath of Alabama Moon; Humphrey C. Traylor of Quilts; Virginia Hayward Cornell of Envy; Susan Mabry of Portrait of a Virgin; Hart Gildrand of Dance of the Nudes; Lulie Hard McKinley of Fear; and Roberta Hays wrote Boligee on Saturday Night. These poems all appeared in the American Mercury. Other writers are Malcolm Burke, Myra Hall and Mrs. Eugenia B. Smith of Montgomery; Rufus Ansley author of Overture; and Kate Ayers Roberts of Mobile, author of The Porter's Trip.

There seems to be an awakening interest in verse writing in the colleges of Alabama. At Alabama College, Montevallo, the Scribbler's Club has published a little pamphlet-like volume of original literary matter by the students, much of its verse.[1] At the Woman's College of Alabama, Montgomery, though no such publication has been issued, the classes in advanced composition are giving attention to verse writing.[2] At the University of Alabama there is today the most serious effort being made at student verse writing in the State. For the past five years there has been a class in verse writing at the University conducted by Professor Carl Carmer. The class began as a voluntary gathering of interested students at night in the old Library in Clarke Hall. The work of the class was not recognized by the University at first, but finally it decided to try the experiment of a course in verse writing. The course was organized with Professor Carl Carmer as teacher and listed in the University Catalogue as a regular University course with three hours credit. Meetings were held

1. The Scribblings
2. Letters of Miss Elizabeth May of Woman's College.

from that time in Room 24, Morgan Hall. The conduct of the class has always been different from the usual class room procedure. Attendance has never been compulsory, nor have assignments been made; there have been no examinations, grades being derived from the quality of the work done and from the interest shown in the class. Only students who evidenced literary ability and talent have been admitted by the instructor. For the past four years a University anthology called Some University of Alabama Poets - Series, has been issued, containing the work of this class. Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, and John V. A. Weaver, who have all visited the class and observed its work, have expressed themselves as pleased with the results being obtained. DuBose Heyward refers to it in his article on Southern Poetry in The Bookman.[1] James Saxon Childers, columnist and critic for the Birmingham News, has written favorable reviews of the third and fourth volumes of the anthology. In discussing the work of Professor Carmer in connection with the University of Alabama verse writing group, the editors of The Bookman comment, "For the past three years he has been conducting an interesting course in the writing of verse at Alabama, and those who have observed it tell us that the results are excellent."[2]

In conclusion, it must be frankly admitted that Alabama has not produced a poet of the very first rank. The writer who is recognized as being foremost verse writer of Alabama up to the present, Samuel Minturn Peck, has chosen to align himself avowedly with the so-called minor poets. Nevertheless, Alabama has an interesting and creditable poetic tradi-

1. Heyward, Dubose, in The Bookman, March, 1926
2. August, 1925, The Bookman

tion, not unworthy of the promising young poets who are beginning to make themselves heard. The poetic work of A. B. Meek, scholar, statesman, soldier, is an evidance of the early culture of the State. In Father Ryan, Alabama gave to the South the laureate of the Lost Cause. Miss Martha Young has done a great service to poetry and to the State by preserving in her inimitable poems the spirit of the negro plantation life. The younger poets of Alabama show unusual promise of future development and contribution, and will be watched with the greatest interest by students of Alabama poetry. And it is worthy of note that the University of Alabama has been an encouraging influence in verse writing from the beginning of the State's history, and is lending encouragement at the present time.